



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter  
In favor of SB598 - Maryland Violence Intervention and  
Prevention  
Program Fund - Appropriation  
Before Budget and Taxation  
Committee on February 22, 2023**

**Mr. Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:**

**Senate Bill 598 increases the annual appropriation for violence intervention and prevention in the state of Maryland to \$40 million. This bill would ensure reliable and sustainable funding for evidence-based public health approaches to prevent gun violence in our state.**

**Amid the global pandemic, [homicides increased 35 percent \[1\]](#). Today, gun violence *remains* the leading cause of premature death for Black men, as well as the number two cause of premature death for Latino men and Black women. [2] It is also the leading killer of our youth in the state of Maryland.**

[1] *Vital Signs: Changes in Firearm Homicide and Suicide Rates — United States, 2019–2020* - May 13, 2022 <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/firearm-deaths/index.html>

[2] CDC Underlying Cause of Death Report, 1999-2020  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D76.jsessionid=4D13A12C941C066443D77D1333EC>

**We are here because we can not — and must not — hide from the harsh truth: Gun violence is ravaging communities around the country, and here at home. Every day, families experience first-hand the devastation gunfire brings. In Maryland, each year an average of 743 people die, and another 1,363 people are wounded by guns. Beyond the tragedy of each life lost, this violence costs our state approximately \$5.7 billion annually. Gun violence is a public health issue that is in need of a public health approach.**

**Senate Bill 598 would support steady and adequate funding for evidence-based violence intervention programs. These programs are evidence-based models such as community and hospital programs focused on directly intervening in interpersonal or group conflict, negotiating ceasefires, stopping retaliatory violence, and shifting neighborhood cultural norms.**

**The success of these programs has been proven around the country, and directly in Maryland. Peer-reviewed research at the Shock Trauma VIP, published in the Journal of Trauma, shows the program reduces the risk of repeat injury in patients from 36% to 5%; reduces the risk of violent retaliation and subsequent conviction of a violent crime four-fold, and increases employment levels in participants from 20% to 82%.**

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**Other jurisdictions across the country are recognizing the value of these programs and have begun to increase their funding accordingly. California has invested \$200 million in violence prevention programs and has one of the lowest firearm mortality rates in the country. The state of New York has invested \$200 million in violence prevention, and Pennsylvania has invested \$336 million in violence prevention.**

**Our state can be a leader in treating gun violence as a public health crisis and invest in the life-saving work of violence intervention. You will hear more from the panelists on how these violence intervention programs work across our state.**

**In 2018, Maryland passed legislation designed to implement the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (MD VIPP). Unfortunately, funding for this program has been inconsistent and/or nonexistent in the years since. After we created the Program, our prior Governor cut the funding in subsequent budgets, prompting several years of back and forth with our General Assembly, during which the programs on the ground were left underfunded and looking for funding elsewhere. At the same time, we know that the demand is much higher than our ask: Baltimore City is using \$50 million dollars in temporary ARPA funds for community violence intervention, and Prince George’s County \$3 million. This sets up a fiscal cliff and we need a long-term solution.**

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**Given the life-saving success of these programs, the creation of MD VIPP was a strong first step in expanding the scope of these proven interventions. However, consistent, and predictable funding is extremely important for hiring and retaining staff, and long-term program success.**

**For these reasons, I urge the committee to give a favorable report on Senate Bill 589. Thank you.**

**Sincerely,**



**Jill P. Carter, Esq.**

[1] *Vital Signs: Changes in Firearm Homicide and Suicide Rates — United States, 2019–2020* - May 13, 2022 <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/firearm-deaths/index.html>

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